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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

I.

QUEER WORDS.

IN Mr. Day's remarks in last month's REVIEW he treats "brottus" as a word peculiar to the city of Savannah, Georgia. In the island of Jamaica the negroes use almost the same word in exactly the same sense. If a negro buys half a dozen bananas he commonly demands one more "*for brata*," —i. e. (to use the old English phrase), "*to boot*." The "a" in *brata* has the full, broad Italian sound, as in "malo" or "baccio." I think we need hardly go so far as the African dialects to find an origin for this word. *Piccaninny*, a common West Indian negro word, is evidently from the Portuguese *Pequeninho*—little one, and *fetish* is traced to *feiticheira*, the Portuguese for "hocus-pocus." It seems probable that *brata* is a corruption of the Portuguese (and Spanish) *barato*—cheap. The Portuguese, having been the first European people to open intercourse with the negro races, may reasonably be supposed to have left these traces of their influence on the first essays of the negroes to speak the various languages of the whites.

EWAN MACPHERSON.

II.

PERSONNEL OF THE STAGE.

It is an accepted scientific truth that motion, not rest, is the normal condition of all matter throughout the universe. This truth seems to carry with it, as a necessary corollary, the additional fact that all motion is progressive. This law, and all that is dependent upon it, governs the world of ethics also. There is, whether in matter or morals, no recession; what appears such is illusive merely, as in the case at certain times of the apparent motions of some of the heavenly bodies. The world we live upon—the men and women we live among—are progressing toward a higher and nobler plane. We are growing better, notwithstanding the discouraging views of pessimism. A clever phrase-maker has spoken of "the fierce white light that beats upon the throne," but such illumination is not comparable to the penetrating interest and searching curiosity with which the public eye regards the actor; and it is a peculiarity of this interest and curiosity that it delights more in magnifying the faults and blemishes of unwise or unfortunate individuals than in noting the merits and virtues of the mass of the profession.

The old English statute which placed upon actors the stigma of vagabondage found an echo in the enactments of many a council-board and in the warnings